



**City of Seattle**

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**Department of Planning and Development**

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3002311

**Applicant Name:** Scott Bevan with Belltown Development Partners

**Address of Proposal:** 2521 Western Avenue

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Land Use Application to allow a 13-story, residential building containing 137 units and a below grade garage housing 70 parking spaces.

The following approvals are required:

**Design Review - Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.41**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes a 13-story residential structure containing 137 units and a below grade garage sheltering 70 parking spaces.

The architect proposes to design a large seven to eight story volume set on top of a three to four level base above a parking garage. A series of diagrams submitted by the architect explore variations in massing (pp 24-25 of the EDG booklet). The diagrams act to introduce the reader to three more detailed massing options. The three schemes share common points of access, a formal residential entry at the northeast corner, garage ingress at the alley, the location of residential units fronting Western at street level and the primary enclosed residential amenity overlooking Vine St. Code compliant scheme #1 places a box above a lower, squatter box and honors the Vine St. view corridor by stepping back at 35 feet (three to four levels) above the street. A series of slight setbacks occur on the south façade above the Millionair Club. Scheme # 2 which varies the mass by producing a vertical column of bays projecting outward above the alley, extends the mass partially into the view corridor above 35' on Vine and emphasizes the street wall along Western. In plan, the units on the residential floors ring a central vertical circulation core. For Scheme # 3, the presentation booklet illustrates a series of additions and subtraction to a code complying building mass. The upper north façade projects five feet into the public view corridor, the upper south façade extends toward the Millionair Club while other portions of the mass are subtracted at the lower south façade and on the west façade in front of the P-Patch in order to regularize the entire upper mass. The floor plans of Schemes # 2 and # 3 resemble one another quite closely.

At the second EDG meeting, the applicant revealed a new massing scheme respecting the integrity of the view corridor, stepping back in the vertical plane at the south elevation to allowing varying amounts of glazing, and showing a clear idea for the rooftop. Both the architect and landscape architect presented much more evolved designs for the elevations, Vine St. and the terraces.

The architect presented refined drawings at the Recommendation meeting. These included significant revisions to the Vine St. right of way and alteration of the appurtenances previously placed in the view corridor.

## **SITE & VICINITY**

The 14,400 square foot, nearly square site lies at the southwest corner of Vine Street and Western Avenue. An alley forms the third border to the west. To the south sits the two-story Millionair Club. The property currently houses a surface parking lot. A 16' declension begins at Western Ave. and ends at the alley.

West of the alley is the Belltown P-Patch, devoted to public agricultural uses, and the landmark designated Belltown Cottages. A one to two story warehouse, south of the Millionair Club building, and another older building complete the full block. Notable buildings in the area include the Banner Building, catty-corner, the Ace Hotel on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., the Hull Building, and the New Pacific Apartment Building. Vine St. is one of Seattle's foremost green streets.

The city has classified the site's zoning as Downtown Mixed Residential / Commercial with an allowable height range of 65' to 125' depending upon uses. (DMR/C 125/65). The site lies within the Belltown Urban Center Village, along a principal arterial, Western Ave.

DMR/C and DMR/R are the dominant zoning classes in the immediate area. West of Elliot Ave the zoning changes to Downtown Harborfront (DH1/45 and DH2/65). DMR heights rise the further east from the water.

## **ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**EDG Meeting #1:** Approximately 30 members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review sign-in sheet. The speaker raised the following issues:

#### **View Corridor**

- The community worked hard to create the view corridor. The building mass should not enter into the view corridor setback. (Note: This was stated by several of the speakers.)
- Preserving the view corridor is important.
- Don't move the proposed structure closer to The Vine Building.

#### **Vine St. landscaping**

- The plaza at the corner of the alley and Vine (at the P-Patch) is one of the most charming places in Belltown.

- The community has been involved with the development of Vine St. for 18 years. This is the first proposal on Vine since the creation of the Growing Vine St. plan.
- Vine St. is a prototype for collecting rainwater. The EDG packet doesn't convey how important this issue is.
- The EDG booklet does not understand the amount of public input that has already occurred.
- Landscaping on Vine is very important.
- The site lies in the middle of the demonstration projects. There is a cistern at 81 Vine and the cistern steps west of the alley. The project site is the missing link and a key piece of the landscaping.
- The Carolyn Geist plaza is only half done. It needs its mirror image on the other side of the alley. Steps in the sidewalk are already approved by SDOT.
- Create the mirror image of the cistern steps/plaza. Be as creative as possible. The community worked hard to put the pieces together.
- The landscape design should make a meaningful connection to the existing landscape along Vine St.

#### Western Ave.

- Western Ave is narrow. It creates a wind tunnel.
- Design the building to achieve a dynamic streetscape.
- Western Ave has a high level of pedestrian accidents.
- The dwelling units on Western should have stoops.
- The design of Western Ave frontage must consider the daily queue of workers at the Millionair Club.
- Western Ave is also a safety concern. The proposed planters and hedges units along Western are not an adequate buffer between the sidewalk and the residential units.

#### The alley

- The alley grade can't be changed much. Use cobblestones on the alley.
- Due to the garage's location across from the P-Patch, design beautiful doors.

#### The Roof

- Pay attention to the design of the roof top mechanical equipment. The design should be as interesting as the equipment on the roofs of nearby buildings. Do not make the mechanical equipment too large.
- Install a living roof. The building should meet green building standards.

#### Programming

- Consider placing the resident amenity area (called the library by the applicant) on Western Ave rather than along Vine.
- Consider creating an entrance at the corner of the building closest to the park where the applicant wants a bike shop.
- Add art both indoors and outdoors. Integrate the art and the landscaping.
- Add a public oriented amenity to the property.

#### Other

- Design a beautiful building.

**EDG Meeting # 2:** Twelve members of the public affixed their names to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Early Design Review sign-in sheet. The speaker raised the following issues:

#### Vine St. landscaping

- Use precious design time and money on making Vine St. wonderful.
- Flatten out areas of the Vine St. improvements creating landings and places to pause. The incline shouldn't be all steps and slope.
- Help correct problems with the cistern.
- The intention along Vine St. should be to make the landscape elements sing.
- Consider the poetic utility of water flow in the design along Vine St.
- Consider the water as an asset and not as a liability. Set the tanks at the P-Patch.
- Much of the landscaping reads as private space. This area in the rights of way should express its public nature.
- Dense vegetation can cause blind spots for the pedestrians. This is a safety issue.

#### Western Ave.

- Activate the corner of Western and Vine. Add a significant piece of art.
- The art would complement the north/south trail from Pike Place Market to the Olympic Sculpture Park that is developing into an outdoor gallery.
- The frontage on Western Ave. looks reasonable.
- The Millionair Club serves 9,000 people a month. This means that there are a lot of people on the street.

#### The Alley

- Use cobblestones in the alley and in the plaza at the alley and Western.
- The alley shouldn't be narrowed. Consider what it will be like on moving days when large vans are parked in the alley.

#### The Roof

- The roof top looks common. Have the courage to do something wonderful.
- Consider whether views are being obstructed. Make the building flatter on top.
- The top of the building needs a strong gesture. The neighboring Banner Building and 81 Vine St. both have interesting rooftops.

#### Programming

- Look at every building from Vine to the sculpture park. They all have some kind of commercial activity. The proposal should have commercial space as well.
- The spaces along the Western ground floor should be designed to be easily retrofitted for businesses.
- Design the spaces along the alley to be available for commercial uses. This would be a fantastic asset to the P-Patch.
- Western is heavily trafficked. The Vine Building has a large recessed court, which ought to influence the Walton Loft's building design.
- Make a bold statement at the corner of the alley and Vine St. It needs something more than a blank wall under the bay window.

#### Installation of Art

- Incorporate local art work.

#### Building Aesthetics

- Think about how many wonderful building elements from the Parisian streetscape could be integrated into the design.

#### Other

- The City should make the building easier to construct.
- The applicant team has done an impressive job of responding to the community. (Other speakers complimented the process.)
- The proposal still lacks elements for the pedestrian.
- Add a timeline to the next city mailer.

DPD staff received two letters carefully articulating several concerns including the corner at the alley and Vine St., the base of the structure at Vine St., the capture of water, the shape of the plaza, community resources and the grades at the alley. The possibility of a blank wall 16 foot high or more at the alley and Vine St. is problematic. Using art to hide an architectural problem will not solve the issue as the building would turn its back on the steps and the plaza. The building should respond to the drop in grade and lower the floor level at the corner space for a more direct relationship to the steps and the plaza. The existing half of the plaza forms a curve rather than a circle. The proposed landscape plan should reflect the established design. The existing grade of the alley must be taken into account by the architect as the design review packet shows a flat grade.

## **GUIDELINES**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponent, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below and identified highest priority by letter and number from the guidelines found in the City of Seattle's "Design Review: Guidelines for Multi-family and Commercial Buildings".

## **PRIORITIES**

<b>A. Site Planning &amp; Massing</b>
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***Responding to the Larger Context***

- A-1 Respond to the Physical Environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

**Belletown-specific supplemental guidance:**

- A. Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures such as the Space Needle;**
- B. The architecture and building mass should respond to sites having nonstandard shapes. There are several changes in the street grid alignment in Belletown, resulting in triangular sites and chamfered corners. Examples of this include: 1st, Western and Elliott between Battery and Lenora, and along Denny;**
- C. The topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.**

EDG Meeting #1: The Board noted this guideline's high importance.

EDG Meeting #2: The idea of a plinth both responding to Belltown's two and three story brick structures and carrying the weight of the metal and glass tower met with the Board's approval.

**A-2 Enhance the Skyline. Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline.**

EDG #1: Responding to public comment, the Board requests more information about the placement and the characteristics of the mechanical penthouses. Atop some of the neighboring buildings, these equipment towers have interesting design characteristics which relate to the community's interest in providing exceptional and artistic infrastructure.

EDG #2: Although the applicant provided designs for the rooftop, the Board, responding to public comment and its earlier guidance, requests a much more interesting presence for the mechanical features and amenity space. The design ought to possess the interest and integrity similar to the rooftop of the Banner Building.

<b>Architectural Expression</b>
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*Relating to the Neighborhood Context*

**B-1 Respond to the Neighborhood Context – Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Belltown has a rich architectural context, with a wide variety of architectural styles represented within the neighborhood. Contemporary methods of building can potentially create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing, and degrees of articulation. Sometimes new buildings add exteriors that mimic past architectural styles, creating a sense of unauthentic design. These guidelines emphasize the concept of historical continuity, or in other words, the relationship of structures over time. This relationship encourages diversity within a coherent whole, reinforcing the unique and evolving character of Belltown.**

EDG #1: The Board supports the idea of a masonry podium or base and a glass and metal tower rising above it. The masonry plinth would relate in height and materials to older Belltown buildings.

EDG #2: The applicant provided more refined renderings of the elevations at this meeting. The general concept met with Board approval. See B-4 guidance.

**B-2 Create a Transition in Bulk & Scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less intensive zones.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

New high-rise and half- to full-block developments are juxtaposed with older and smaller scale buildings throughout the neighborhood. Many methods to reduce the apparent scale of new developments through contextually responsive design are identified in other guidelines (e.g., *B-1: Respond to the neighborhood context* and *B-3: Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area*). The objective of this guideline is to discourage overly massive, bulky or unmodulated structures that are unsympathetic to the surrounding context.

- B-3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area.** Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

The principal objective of this guideline is to promote scale and character compatibility through reinforcement of the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings.

- A. Respond to the regulating lines and rhythms of adjacent buildings that also support a street-level environment; regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines, doors, windows, structural bays and modulation.
- B. Use regulating lines to promote contextual harmony, solidify the relationship between new and old buildings, and lead the eye down the street.
- C. Pay attention to excellent fenestration patterns and detailing in the vicinity. The use of recessed windows that create shadow lines, and suggest solidity, is encouraged.

EDG #1: The applicant's proposal to build in the view corridor was not accepted by the Board. A request for a departure would not likely be granted as it does not appear that projecting into the view corridor would better meet the design guidelines.

EDG #2: The change to the massing eliminated the structure's intrusion into the view corridor. The architect stated at the meeting that it was not the applicant team's intent to place balconies, railings and other appurtenances into the view corridor.

- B-4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building.** Compose the massing and organize the publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.

EDG #1: As mentioned above, the Board agreed with the podium/tower concept. The shaping of the tower will be an important consideration as the design progresses.

EDG #2: After much focused questioning on the building mass and the amount of lot coverage (see departure analysis at the end of the report), the Board expressed its satisfaction with the overall massing. At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant will need to provide the calculations showing that the amount of floor area equals what a code complying structure would possess.

## The Streetscape

### *Creating the Pedestrian Environment*

- C-1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction.** Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

- A.** reinforce existing retail concentrations;
- B.** vary in size, width, and depth of commercial spaces, accommodating for smaller businesses, where feasible;
- C.** incorporate the following elements in the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building: unique hardscape treatments, pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting, accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways), creative landscape treatments (planting, planters, trellises, arbors), seating, gathering spaces, water features, inclusion of art elements
- D. Building/Site Corners:** Building corners are places of convergence. The following considerations help reinforce site and building corners: provide meaningful setbacks/  
open space, if feasible, provide seating as gathering spaces, incorporate street/  
pedestrian amenities in these spaces, make these spaces safe (good visibility),  
and iconic corner identifiers to create wayfinders that draw people to the site.

EDG #1: The location of the residential amenity area (the library) merited discussion. Does it make more sense to place this feature along Western Ave rather than along and above Vine St? By the next meeting, the architects should, at least, consider Western Ave. as an option and provide a strong rationale for their ultimate direction.

Due to the adjacency of the Millionaire Club and the practice of workers queuing along Western Ave, discussion focused on how the design of the residential units fronting on the street could create a useful separation between the residential use and the pedestrian activity. As shown in the drawings, the planters separating the sidewalk from the units did not appear to provide adequate buffer.

The building's relationship to the three conterminous rights of way, including the alley, should promote pedestrian interaction by the exceptional handling of materials, landscaping, and transparency.

EDG #2: The Board accepted the location of the resident amenity area extending along and above Vine St. This placement provides better views than if the amenity area fronted onto Western.

After the first EDG meeting, the applicant reduced the number of units facing Western at grade and added an exercise room. The façade along Western Ave at street level remains problematic and appears a secondary consideration. It does little to promote the pedestrian realm and appears to turn its back on the street. The Board agreed with the decision to avoid unit entrances on the street; however, the landscaping and the design of



the infill between the masonry piers require considerable development. The detailing and the quality materials will be important considerations at the Recommendation meeting.

- C-2 Design Facades of Many Scales. Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and materials compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.**

EDG #1: The Board noted that the architect appeared to understand the importance of this guideline.

Due to its visibility above the Millionair Club, the design strategy for the south façade will be an important consideration at the next meeting.

EDG #2: See C-3.

- C-3 Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades. Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.**

EDG #1: Emphasis focused on the desirability of transparency and attention to detail at street level for both Western Ave and Vine St. Due to the west façade's proximity and exposure to the P-Patch, the base along the alley should have more detail and interest than would normally be for an elevation facing an alley. At the second EDG meeting, the drawings should clearly identify where transparency and blank walls will occur at the three rights of way. Avoid large expanses of blank wall at the building's base. Detailing of the masonry provides an opportunity for exploration of texture and pattern along the structure's base to engage pedestrians.

EDG #2: The Board discussed the merits of providing greater transparency at the corner of Vine and the alley. See Board guidance C-6 below.

- C-4 Reinforce Building Entries. To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.**

EDG #1: The Board members expressed general agreement with the applicant that the primary residential entry ought to occur at the corner of Vine and Western.

EDG #2: No further discussion on this subject occurred.

- C-5 Encourage Overhead Weather Protection. Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:**

- A. the overall architectural concept of the building (as described in Guideline B-4);**
- B. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);**
- C. minimizing gaps in coverage;**
- D. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;**
- E. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;**

- F. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
- G. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;
- H. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and
- I. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.

EDG #1: The applicant requested a departure for the design of the overhead weather protection. The Board noted that it was too early to determine whether holding the canopy a few feet away from the building edge made sense.

EDG #2: The Board stated its inclination to approve the departure request for the canopies. The applicant will need to provide more details of the canopy at the next meeting.

**C-6 Develop the Alley Façade. To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations**

**Spaces for service and utilities:**

- A. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.
- B. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.
- C. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.
- D. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.

**Pedestrian environment:**

- E. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.
- F. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.

**Architectural concept:**

- G. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley façade should not be ignored. An alley façade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.

EDG #1: Due to its visibility from the west, the alley façade has more importance than a typical alley. The design should have an attention to detail; in particular, the two proposed garage doors should possess interest and a level of refinement matching the rest of the structure.

EDG #2: Greater consideration should be given to the elevation of the bike storage area facing the alley and the plaza connecting with the P-Patch. The wall should possess greater transparency. The bike storage space should have the flexibility to change into a more active use over time. Endow this corner space with a presence (and possibly a use) that interacts with the P-Patch.

<b>Public Amenities:</b>
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- D-1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space. Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

As a dense, urban neighborhood, Belltown views its streets as its front porches, and its parks and private plazas and spaces as its yards and gardens. The design and location of urban open spaces on a site or adjoining sidewalk is an important determinant in a successful environment, and the type and character of the open space should be influenced by the building's uses.

**Residential open space: Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

EDG #1: Key to the project's success is continuing the design language established for Vine St.

EDG #2: Based on public comment heard by the Board, the landscape architect should continue to refine the design for Vine St. The Vine St design seems too monumental. Observations by the Board included that the runnel appeared too private and rigid. In addition, there ought to be more opportunities for water reclamation.

By the Recommendation meeting, SDOT will need to provide concept approval of the proposed Vine St. right of way improvements. The applicant will need to draw sections of the right of way to explain the steps, ramps and landings.

- D-2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping. Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below, where appropriate:

- A. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;
- B. use landscaping to make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction;

- C. **distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation, such as entry courtyards;**
- D. **provide year-round greenery - drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns; and**
- E. **provide opportunities for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/artist collaborations are encouraged**

EDG #1: The alley façade ought to acknowledge the P-Patch amenity. Talk to the gardeners at the P-Patch. Design the plinth to complement the lush landscape across the alley.

The design of the landscaping along Vine St. should complete the gap between the area adjacent to the P-Patch and the area in front of the building at 81 Vine St. Explore a rainwater collection system to complement the other systems along Vine St. Similar to the others, the system should visibly express the process of collection and transmittal of water.

Provide concept landscape plans for the roof and terrace(s). Will the terrace above Vine St. possess a water collection system integrated with the Vine St. landscaping?

EDG #2: The terraces above Vine St. and on the rooftop have two dimensional features that echo the patterns and movement of the landscape developed for Vine St. The development team should continue to work with the community refining the design for Vine St. The notion of weaving landscape elements should be carefully thought through.

**D-3 Provide Elements that Define the Place. Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**Belltown is eclectic, diverse, eccentric and whimsical. New developments should incorporate elements on building facades, within open space, or on the sidewalk that refer to the neighborhood’s rich art and history to reinforce a sense of place in Belltown.**

- **Art and Heritage: Art and History are vital to reinforcing a sense of place.**
- **Green Streets: Green Streets are street rights-of-way that are enhanced for pedestrian circulation and activity with a variety of pedestrian-oriented features, such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, artwork, and traffic calming. Interesting street level uses and pedestrian amenities enliven the Green Street and lend special identity to the surrounding area.**
- **Street Hierarchy: The function and character of Belltown’s streetscapes are defined street by street. In defining the streetscape for various streets, the hierarchy of streets is determined by street function, adjacent land uses, and the nature of existing streetscape improvements.**

EDG #1: Consider using, landscaping, art and placemaking techniques to endow Western, Vine and the alley with an identity. Vine St. should integrate the concepts provided in the *Growing Vine Street Revisited 2004* document.

EDG #2: The designs for Western Ave., Vine St. and the alley should contribute to creating a singular sense of place. The collaboration between the development team and

the community ought to continue in order to support this goal. The introduction of art and hand crafted or individualized architectural and landscape elements will also contribute to making this a reality.

- D-5 Provide Adequate Lighting. To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations**

Consider employing one or more of the following lighting strategies as appropriate.

- A. Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.**
- B. Install lighting in display windows that spills onto and illuminates the sidewalk.**
- C. Orient outside lighting to minimize glare within the public right-of-way.**

EDG #1: Ensure safety by providing adequate pedestrian scaled lighting along the three rights of way.

EDG #2: Provide a concept lighting plan for the Recommendation meeting.

- D-6 Design for Personal Safety & Security. Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.**

EDG #1: See guidance for D-5.

EDG #2: Ensure that the design for Vine St. does not create security issues.

<b>Vehicular Access &amp; Parking</b>
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***Minimizing the Adverse Impacts***

- E-2 Integrate Parking Facilities. Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.**

EDG #1: Discussion focused on the need for two garage doors on the alley. The Board concluded that if two doors are needed that they should be well designed.

EDG #2: The applicant did not focus on the appearance of the garage doors. This issue may be an important consideration at the Recommendation meeting as the doors face the P-Patch.

- E-3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas. Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where**

**possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.**

## **MASTER USE PERMIT APPLICATION**

The applicant revised the design and applied for a Master Use Permit with a Design Review component on March 5, 2013.

## **DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

The Design Review Board conducted a Final Recommendation Meeting on July 16, 2013 to review the applicant's formal project proposal developed in response to the previously identified priorities. At the public meetings, site plans, elevations, floor plans, landscaping plans, and computer renderings of the proposed exterior materials were presented for the Board members' consideration.

### **Public Comments**

Sixteen members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. In general, most of the speakers praised the project and the efforts of the development team to include the community. Comments focused on the rain water infrastructure, the two plazas, and improvements to the treatment of the façade at the alley. Specific enhancements requested include:

- Further refinement of the alley paving and the pony wall at the P-patch;
- Use of a material other than glass for the balconies;
- Need for functional balconies;
- Continue to improve water retention; and
- Build storefront entries on Western Ave now.

DPD received several letters commenting on the proposal. The authors mentioned the following: need for adherence to the Growing Vine Street Concept; paving of the entire alley; activation of the Western Ave street frontage; lack of adequate parking in the building; concerns about traffic during construction; and inconsistency with the character of the block.

Another letter addressed three issues: the need to connect the water runnel to the catch basin at the top of the cistern steps; the developer's agreement to build a curb at the p-patch property line to accommodate the grade change; and the importance of refining the alley paving pattern.

<b>A      Site Planning &amp; Massing</b>
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### ***Responding to the Larger Context***

- A-1      Respond to the Physical Environment. Develop an architectural concept and compose the building's massing in response to geographic conditions and patterns of urban form found beyond the immediate context of the building site.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

- D. Develop the architectural concept and arrange the building mass to enhance views. This includes views of the water and mountains, and noteworthy structures such as the Space Needle;**
- E. The architecture and building mass should respond to sites having nonstandard shapes. There are several changes in the street grid alignment in Belltown, resulting in triangular sites and chamfered corners. Examples of this include: 1st, Western and Elliott between Battery and Lenora, and along Denny;**
- F. The topography of the neighborhood lends to its unique character. Design buildings to take advantage of this condition as an opportunity, rather than a constraint. Along the streets, single entry, blank facades are discouraged. Consider providing multiple entries and windows at street level on sloping streets.**

- A-2 Enhance the Skyline. Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety in the downtown skyline.**

Earlier deliberation focused on the design of the rooftop. The Board did not discuss the merits of the design presented at the Recommendation meeting.

<b>Architectural Expression</b>
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***Relating to the Neighborhood Context***

- B-1 Respond to the Neighborhood Context – Develop an architectural concept and compose the major building elements to reinforce desirable urban features existing in the surrounding neighborhood.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Belltown has a rich architectural context, with a wide variety of architectural styles represented within the neighborhood. Contemporary methods of building can potentially create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing, and degrees of articulation. Sometimes new buildings add exteriors that mimic past architectural styles, creating a sense of unauthentic design. These guidelines emphasize the concept of historical continuity, or in other words, the relationship of structures over time. This relationship encourages diversity within a coherent whole, reinforcing the unique and evolving character of Belltown.

- B-2 Create a Transition in Bulk & Scale. Compose the massing of the building to create a transition to the height, bulk, and scale of development in neighboring or nearby less intensive zones.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

New high-rise and half- to full-block developments are juxtaposed with older and smaller scale buildings throughout the neighborhood. Many methods to reduce the apparent scale of new developments through contextually responsive design are identified in other guidelines (e.g., *B-1: Respond to the neighborhood context* and



*B-3: Reinforce the positive urban form & architectural attributes of the immediate area).* The objective of this guideline is to discourage overly massive, bulky or unmodulated structures that are unsympathetic to the surrounding context.

- B-3 Reinforce the Positive Urban Form & Architectural Attributes of the Immediate Area.** Consider the predominant attributes of the immediate neighborhood and reinforce desirable siting patterns, massing arrangements, and streetscape characteristics of nearby development.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

The principal objective of this guideline is to promote scale and character compatibility through reinforcement of the desirable patterns of massing and facade composition found in the surrounding area. Pay particular attention to designated landmarks and other noteworthy buildings.

- D.** Respond to the regulating lines and rhythms of adjacent buildings that also support a street-level environment; regulating lines and rhythms include vertical and horizontal patterns as expressed by cornice lines, belt lines, doors, windows, structural bays and modulation.
- E.** Use regulating lines to promote contextual harmony, solidify the relationship between new and old buildings, and lead the eye down the street.
- F.** Pay attention to excellent fenestration patterns and detailing in the vicinity. The use of recessed windows that create shadow lines, and suggest solidity, is encouraged.

- B-4 Design a Well-Proportioned & Unified Building.** Compose the massing and organize the publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces to create a well-proportioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole.

The Board observed that the plinth or podium level ought to have a stronger presence. The design of the metal overhang from the upper levels on the east elevation and the projecting bay on the west elevation dissipate the visual integrity of the brick cornice. Revise the design to reassert the cornice at these locations.

The intent of interlocking the upper metal and glass mass with the podium level on the east and west facades appeared arbitrary, perhaps, unintentionally emphasizing the garage entrance on the alley elevation. No recommendation to revise the design was provided.

## **The Streetscape**

### *Creating the Pedestrian Environment*

- C-1 Promote Pedestrian Interaction.** Spaces for street level uses should be designed to engage pedestrians with the activities occurring within them. Sidewalk-related spaces should be open to the general public and appear safe and welcoming.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**



- E. reinforce existing retail concentrations;
- F. vary in size, width, and depth of commercial spaces, accommodating for smaller businesses, where feasible;
- G. incorporate the following elements in the adjacent public realm and in open spaces around the building: unique hardscape treatments, pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting, accent paving (especially at corners, entries and passageways), creative landscape treatments (planting, planters, trellises, arbors), seating, gathering spaces, water features, inclusion of art elements
- H. **Building/Site Corners:** Building corners are places of convergence. The following considerations help reinforce site and building corners: provide meaningful setbacks/open space, if feasible, provide seating as gathering spaces, incorporate street/ pedestrian amenities in these spaces, make these spaces safe (good visibility), and iconic corner identifiers to create wayfinders that draw people to the site.

Earlier Board discussion focused on the design of the Western Ave street front. Revisions to the canopies and the landscaping met with the Board's approval.

- C-2 **Design Facades of Many Scales.** Design architectural features, fenestration patterns, and materials compositions that refer to the scale of human activities contained within. Building facades should be composed of elements scaled to promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation.

In response to a public comment, the Board stated its satisfaction with the unobtrusive balconies and exterior railings.

- C-3 **Provide Active—Not Blank—Facades.** Buildings should not have large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

- C-4 **Reinforce Building Entries.** To promote pedestrian comfort, safety, and orientation, reinforce the building's entry.

- C-5 **Encourage Overhead Weather Protection.** Encourage project applicants to provide continuous, well-lit, overhead weather protection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety along major pedestrian routes.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration given to:

- J. the overall architectural concept of the building (as described in Guideline B-4);
- K. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);
- L. minimizing gaps in coverage;
- M. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level facade and sidewalk;
- N. continuity with weather protection provided on nearby buildings;
- O. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
- P. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection;

- Q. use of translucent or transparent covering material to maintain a pleasant sidewalk environment with plenty of natural light; and**
- R. when opaque material is used, the illumination of light-colored undersides to increase security after dark.**

Changes to the canopies allowing a 12 inch gap between the wall and the marquee (see departure discussion # 3) met with the Board's tacit approval.

**C-6 Develop the Alley Façade. To increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest, develop portions of the alley façade in response to the unique conditions of the site or project.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations**

**Spaces for service and utilities:**

- H. Services and utilities, while essential to urban development, should be screened or otherwise hidden from the view of the pedestrian.**
- I. Exterior trash receptacles should be screened on three sides, with a gate on the fourth side that also screens the receptacles from view. Provide a niche to recess the receptacle.**
- J. Screen loading docks and truck parking from public view using building massing, architectural elements and/or landscaping.**
- K. Ensure that all utility equipment is located, sized, and designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. Consider ways to reduce the noise impacts of HVAC equipment on the alley environment.**

**Pedestrian environment:**

- L. Pedestrian circulation is an integral part of the site layout. Where possible and feasible, provide elements, such as landscaping and special paving, that help define a pedestrian-friendly environment in the alley.**
- M. Create a comfortably scaled and thoughtfully detailed urban environment in the alley through the use of well-designed architectural forms and details, particularly at street level.**

**Architectural concept:**

- N. In designing a well-proportioned and unified building, the alley façade should not be ignored. An alley façade should be treated with form, scale and materials similar to rest of the building to create a coherent architectural concept.**

The architect revised the building corner at the alley and Vine St to accommodate greater transparency. This change appealed to both the community and the Board.

<b>Public Amenities:</b>
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- D-1 Provide Inviting & Usable Open Space. Design public open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, and active environment for workers, residents, and visitors. Views and solar access from the principal area of the open space should be especially emphasized.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

**As a dense, urban neighborhood, Belltown views its streets as its front porches, and**

its parks and private plazas and spaces as its yards and gardens. The design and location of urban open spaces on a site or adjoining sidewalk is an important determinant in a successful environment, and the type and character of the open space should be influenced by the building's uses.

**Residential open space:** Residential buildings should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

Significant changes to the Vine St. landscape design reduced its monumentality and added a rainwater conveyance system from the lower roof. The Board appreciated the inclusion of an artist in the project design who will produce custom made or handcrafted elements to the project. The Board recommended that DPD ensure that an artist will produce the handrails, art-screen, splash “hands” at the bottom of the open downspouts and step risers along Vine St.

**D-2 Enhance the Building with Landscaping. Enhance the building and site with substantial landscaping—which includes special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, and site furniture, as well as living plant material.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Landscape enhancement of the site may include some of the approaches or features listed below, where appropriate:

- F. emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting;**
- G. use landscaping to make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction;**
- H. distinctively landscape open areas created by building modulation, such as entry courtyards;**
- I. provide year-round greenery - drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns; and**
- J. provide opportunities for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/artist collaborations are encouraged**

See guidance for D-1 and D-3.

**D-3 Provide Elements that Define the Place. Provide special elements on the facades, within public open spaces, or on the sidewalk to create a distinct, attractive, and memorable “sense of place” associated with the building.**

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance:**

Belltown is eclectic, diverse, eccentric and whimsical. New developments should incorporate elements on building facades, within open space, or on the sidewalk that refer to the neighborhood's rich art and history to reinforce a sense of place in Belltown.

- **Art and Heritage:** Art and History are vital to reinforcing a sense of place.
- **Green Streets:** Green Streets are street rights-of-way that are enhanced for pedestrian circulation and activity with a variety of pedestrian-oriented features, such as sidewalk widening, landscaping, artwork, and traffic calming. Interesting street level uses and pedestrian amenities enliven the Green Street and lend special identity to the surrounding area.

- **Street Hierarchy:** The function and character of Belltown's streetscapes are defined street by street. In defining the streetscape for various streets, the hierarchy of streets is determined by street function, adjacent land uses, and the nature of existing streetscape improvements.

The Board approved the design of the Vine St. right of way and recommended a condition to ensure the installation of hand crafted architectural and landscape elements. See guidance for D-1.

- D-5 Provide Adequate Lighting.** To promote a sense of security for people downtown during nighttime hours, provide appropriate levels of lighting on the building facade, on the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, and on signage.

**Belltown-specific supplemental guidance: Considerations**

Consider employing one or more of the following lighting strategies as appropriate.

- D.** Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest.
- E.** Install lighting in display windows that spills onto and illuminates the sidewalk.
- F.** Orient outside lighting to minimize glare within the public right-of-way.

The Board did not comment upon the concept lighting plan.

- D-6 Design for Personal Safety & Security.** Design the building and site to enhance the real and perceived feeling of personal safety and security in the immediate area.

The Board requested that the applicant and DPD work with SDOT to improve the crosswalk.

## **Vehicular Access & Parking**

### ***Minimizing the Adverse Impacts***

- E-2 Integrate Parking Facilities.** Minimize the visual impact of parking by integrating parking facilities with surrounding development. Incorporate architectural treatments or suitable landscaping to provide for the safety and comfort of people using the facility as well as those walking by.
- E-3 Minimize the Presence of Service Areas.** Locate service areas for trash dumpsters, loading docks, mechanical equipment, and the like away from the street front where possible. Screen from view those elements which for programmatic reasons cannot be located away from the street front.

**Board Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans submitted at the July 16th, 2013 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the July 16th public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the five Design Review Board members present

unanimously recommended approval of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1. Structural Building Overhangs SMC 23.53.035A.1	Vertical clearance shall be a minimum of 26' from an alley.	Vertical clearance of 14' from finished alley elevation within the 2' alley dedication zone. 16' vertical clearance from the finished alley elevation to bottom of bay window at northern end of alley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design provides improved building proportions and design consistency. B-4, C-6</li> </ul>	Approval
2. Structural Building Overhangs SMC 23.53.035A	The maximum length of each bay window shall be 15', reduced to 9' with 45 degree angles.	Square bay, as wide as 22'3".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Width of bay guided by view corridor setback and design consistency. B-4, C-2</li> </ul>	Approved based on fulfillment of related condition.
3. Overhead Weather Protection SMC 23.49.018	Continuous overhead weather protection shall be required along the entire street frontage, minimum dimension of 8' horizontally from building wall.	Overhead weather protection 6' horizontally from building wall, with inside edge held as much as 12" from face of wall, except within corner bulb area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marquee reduced to meet street planting standards.</li> <li>Marquee held off face of building to create drip edge for landscaping below and to discourage habitation by transient population. D-6</li> </ul>	Approved
4. Lot Coverage above 85'. SMC 23.49.158	<p>For portions of the structure between 0'-65': 100% lot coverage</p> <p>For portions greater than 65' to 85': 75% maximum lot coverage</p> <p>For portions greater than 85' to 125', 65% maximum lot coverage</p>	Average the lot coverage for all floors, reapportioning area to allow for consistent floor plate sizes in the tower portion of the building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Averaging lot coverage for floors above 35' results in better overall massing than proscribed by the code requirements. B-4</li> </ul>	Approved

The Board recommended the following **CONDITIONS** for the project. (Authority referenced in the letter and number in parenthesis):

- 1) Revise the design of the metal overhang from the upper levels on the east elevation and the projecting bay on the west elevation to reassert the masonry cornice. Ensure that the visual integrity of the podium's brick framing device remains (B-4)
- 2) Ensure that an artist will craft the handrails, art-screen, splash "hands" at the bottom of the open downspouts and step risers along Vine St. (D-1,2 and 3)

### **DIRECTOR'S ANALYSIS - DESIGN REVIEW**

The Director finds no conflicts with state or federal laws, and has reviewed the City-wide Design Guidelines and finds that the Board neither exceeded its authority nor applied the guidelines inconsistently in the approval of this design. The Director agrees with the conditions recommended by the four Board members and the recommendation to approve the design, as stated above.

## **DECISION - DESIGN REVIEW**

The proposed design is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

## **CONDITIONS – DESIGN REVIEW**

### *Prior to MUP Issuance*

Revise plans sets to show:

1. Revise the design of the metal overhang from the upper levels on the east elevation and the projecting bay on the west elevation to reassert the masonry cornice. Ensure that the visual integrity of the podium's brick framing device remains.
2. Ensure that an artist will craft the handrails, art-screen, splash "hands" at the bottom of the open downspouts and step risers along Vine St.

### *Prior to Building Application*

3. Include the departure matrix in the zoning summary section on all subsequent building permit plans. Add call-out notes on appropriate plan and elevation drawings in the updated MUP plans and on all subsequent building permit plans.

### *Prior to Commencement of Construction*

4. Arrange a pre-construction meeting with the building contractor, building inspector, and land use planner to discuss expectations and details of the Design Review component of the project.

### *Prior to Issuance of all Construction Permits*

5. Embed the MUP conditions in the cover sheet for all subsequent permits including updated building permit drawings.

### *Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy*

6. Compliance with all images and text on the MUP drawings, design review meeting guidelines and approved design features and elements (including exterior materials, landscaping and ROW improvements) shall be verified by the DPD planner assigned to this project (Bruce P. Rips, 206.615-1392). An appointment with the assigned Land Use Planner must be made at least one week in advance of field inspection. The Land Use Planner will determine whether submission of revised plans is required to ensure that compliance has been achieved.

### *For the Life of the Project*

7. Any proposed changes to the exterior of the building or the site or must be submitted to DPD for review and approval by the Land Use Planner (Bruce Rips, 206.615-1392). Any proposed changes to the improvements in the public right-of-way must be submitted to DPD and SDOT for review and for final approval by SDOT.

Compliance with all applicable conditions must be verified and approved by the Land Use Planner, Bruce Rips, (206-615-1392) at the specified development stage, as required by the Director's decision. The Land Use Planner shall determine whether the condition requires submission of additional documentation or field verification to assure that compliance has been achieved.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: September 26, 2013  
Bruce P. Rips, AAIA, AICP  
Department of Planning and Development

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